

Townhall.com
October 8, 2009

Today the House considered the conference report on the National Defense Authorization Act—the annual bill that sets out the budget and policy for our military. As a member of the Armed Services Committee, I have played a role in developing this bill from the beginning and have a number of provisions included that I think are very important. Usually, this bill is a rare example of bipartisan agreement in a sea of Washington partisan politics. Unfortunately, the conference report we considered yesterday is sad and shocking attempt to advance a liberal agenda on the backs of our troops. As a strong supporter of our troops, and the father of three Marines, I will not allow myself to be blackmailed this way.

The Democrats in Congress have decided that the defense authorization bill is the best way to pass hate crimes legislation, one of the left's favorite agenda items. This legislation is dangerous on many levels, and is very controversial. Instead of considering this issue as a stand alone bill, Democrats have attached it to the Defense Authorization act, hoping that Republicans and conservative Democrats in the House and the Senate will feel pressured to vote for it. This is simply dirty politics at its worst in Washington. The Democrats have large majorities in both the House and the Senate—if they believe that this issue is so important, they should bring it forward as a separate bill, not tacked on to the defense bill.

This cynical maneuver by the Democrats is something that I cannot support. As Americans, we should not allow politicians on either side of the aisle to use our troops as a vehicle to advance a controversial political agenda. Unfortunately, it has now passed the House. I certainly hope the Senate will join a number of us in the House in voting against this shameful stunt.

Congressman Akin represents Missouri's 2nd congressional district and serves on the House Armed Services Committee.